





Photocopying © 1983 by Michael M. Glantz

Publisher

JERRY WEIST

Editor

JOHN BENSON

Staff

ROGER HILL
LARRY IVIE
BILL PEARSON
BILL PECKMANN

Our thanks to

BILL GAINES

without whose kind cooperation this issue would not have been probable.

Special thanks to

RICH HAUSER

for allowing us to use "The Planetoid" which was originally promised for *Spa Fan*.

Dedicated to

GARY ARLINGTON

No. 1 EC fan in the universe.

Acknowledgements and Thanks: Ron Barlow, Larry Sigman, Johnny Craig, Ed Oleson, Tony King, Paul Kast, Mark Kozlowski, Harvey Kurtzman, Ed Schwabert, Bill Spicer, Bruce Stewart, John Vanpoolen, Fred von Barmwitz, Joe White, Ted White, Al Williamson, and whoever we forgot.

SQUA TRONT

no.5

CONTENTS

KURTZMAN ON SESAME STREET 5

THE PLANETOID art by Al Williamson and George Evans; script by Bill Gaines and Al Feldstein 17

3-D: MANY LEVELS art by Wally Wood 24

GRAHAM ENGELS Part Two 28

THE GHOULNATIC PHOTOS text by Paul Kast; photo captions by Johnny Craig 31

PUBLICITY FOR EC 35

THE EC FANZINES Part One 38

THANK YOU FOR YOUR NOTE art by Marie Severin 47

QUA BROTT anecdotal 48

ART CREDITS: Reed Crandall, pg. 2; Frank Frazetta, pg. 48; Al Williamson, pg. 49; Roy G. Krenkel, pg. 50; Bernard Kruttschnitt, pg. 51.

KURTZMAN ON SESAME STREET

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Phil Krimmelman & Associates, Inc. is a firm that specializes in advertising animation, often based on storyboards and designs by famous cartoonists. They've done commercials utilizing the work of Tomi Ungerer, Les Meyers, Rowland B. Wilson, Stan Mack, Mort Drucker, Alan Wilson and Jack Davis. They've also animated a number of commercials from original material of their own.

Being long time fans of Harvey Kurtzman, both Krimmelman and his associate Bill Peckmann had wanted to work with him to create an animated film ever since they started, but somehow the right property never seemed to come along. When *Sesame Street* became a market place for animated material, however, it became obvious that this was what their project with Kurtzman would be for.

They contacted Kurtzman in the summer of 1972 and he was enthusiastic about the idea. He worked up eight rough

storyboards which they submitted to *Sesame Street*. Three were accepted and Kurtzman prepared complete and detailed storyboards for these which were then shown and given final approval by *Sesame Street*.

The three story ideas then went through the standard stages of animation. Kurtzman made a number of layout drawings for the animator to follow. The animators were very impressed by Kurtzman's feel for a new medium and his understanding of what "moments" of action to choose in his sketches to guide the animators.

Then Kurtzman made color roughs and painted the backgrounds which were to be used for two of the films. Sound tracks were recorded with Allen Swift doing the voices. Children's voices were also used for one picture, Kurtzman's young daughter Nellie among them. The films were then animated and then inked and colored on cels.



SQUA TRONT #5, 1974 issue. Single copy price, \$5.00. Entire contents copyright © 1974 by John Benson. Front and back covers copyright © 1974 by William M. Gaines. Art and photographs on pages 17-23, 31-34, and 41 copyright © 1974 by William M. Gaines. Art and photographs on pages 5-16 copyright © 1974 by Bill Peckmann. Photographs on pages 24-25 copyright © 1982 by Louis Krimmelman Publishing Co. Pages 36-37 copyright © 1984 by Vincent Magliocco. Cover reproductions of the EC Fan Bulletin on pages 36 and 41 copyright © 1974 by Robert M. Schenk. All correspondence regarding back issues, dealer discounts or subscription orders should be addressed to Jerry Weist, 30 Bedford Street, Cambridge, Mass., 02148. Correspondence must also be sent to Jerry Weist in care of the editor. All letters of comment or correspondence regarding editorial matters should be addressed to John Benson, 267 W. 80th Street, New York, N.Y. 10024. Printed in U.S.A.

The three one minute films, which are being aired during the 1973-74 season, don't have formal titles. One, with the working title "Nellie," shows a sequence of numbers which are chanted by children. Intercut with the numbers are pictures, and the children chant, "That's not 6, that's an elephant," etc. This was animated by Jack Scherck. In "Count Off," animated by Sal Pailace, a "zero" sergeant requires sinners to stand at attention and count off. In the third and most ambitious work, titled "Bart" and animated by Daniele Barbetta, an old sea dog fills his boat with numbers until it sinks.

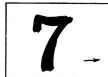
The films were directed by Kinnelsman and Kurtzman together, Kurtzman having been present at the recording sessions and generally having a creative hand at every step of

the way. Both were excited by the whole project and in fact they put more money into it than they were paid by Sesame Street. Because it was a prestige and not a bread-and-butter project for the firm, it was worked on in slack periods and consequently it took a little under a year to finish the three films.

The wait was worth it, however, because they represent superb pure animated Kurzman.

—John Benson

To the right is an early version of the elephant, which was not used in the film. Trudging was abandoned for the sidelong gallop below and overlaid.



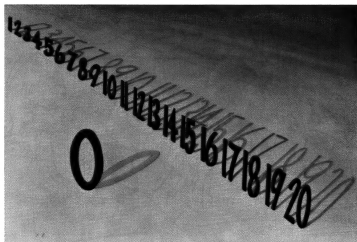
- seven -
- seven -



- eight -

That's not an eight! That's an ELEPHANT!!





Polite applause as speaker mounts rostrum.



Speaker silences vast crowd—



Speaks the alphabet—synchronized to letters in balloons.



Says B-C's with much inflection & passion—



Speaks firmly—hope-fully, softly, loudly—



Pauses for applause. Occasional voice from audience, i.e., "Yed! G!"



Doesn't say anything but the alphabet.



"Speech" goes to climax



Speaker leaves rostrum to deafening applause.

The storyboards on this and the following pages were not among those chosen by Sesame Street. The "speech" was rejected because something mildly similar had been used before.



Sound of feet - like finger nails drumming on a table top.



Marching Band and voices of rest cheering crowd



Cheering swells. "He-hee! Look! Here it comes!" all shout "ONE!"



Cheering swells - but is sustained Beat of bass drum pounding.



Drum gives way to bugles. Voice swells to "TWO!"



Bugles replaced by Hummers banjos.



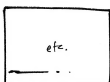
Voices swell! "Look! What's coming next!" etc. Then "THREE!"



Banjos fade, replaced by trill ear, back firing.



Drum replaced by teeny marching people/voices - "FOUR!"



etc.



Voices: --A--

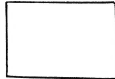
Bouncing Sound "Bunk Bunk" - tumbling sound



--B--



--C-- (pause)

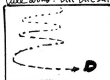


--D--

Scene Sound: "BLATUGH!"



Carte Sound: "Dee Dee Dee!"



Sound of Galloping Horses



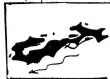
(Voice) --I--

Slide whistle - CLASH!



--J--

Gurgling, bubbling water



--K--

Advancing Monster Steps - etc.





Chef, between salad and soup, sits by fire, cooking alphabet



He washes the letters, one by one. "Alphabet's delicious!"



"That's a B!" He trims, scrapes + washes. Little



Finally, the Z goes into the... which, chef seasons pepper/salt-



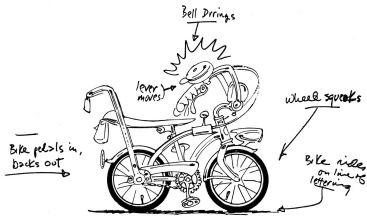
He stirs mixture, "Alph, I love nice warm alphabet soup"

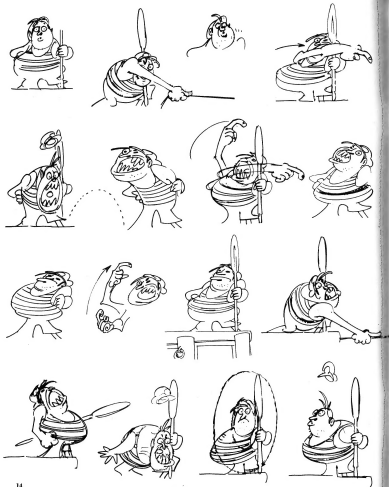


shedding clothes... especially to BATHING in!"



Kurtzman made detailed drawings of both two and three wheeled vehicles. He decided to use the bicycle in the finished film. Above is Helia of the film of the same name. Flip the page for a change of expression, in the storyboard Helia was originally Marvin, but Sesame Street, sensitive to charges of sexism, asked Kurtzman to make the change so there would be more girls in the program.





The Association of International Film Animation East (ASIFA) gives three annual awards in each of five major categories. At the 1973 awards ceremony, Phil Kinnelmann & Associates came away with 13 of those 15 awards (others managed third place in two categories). Harvey Kurtzman won first place for "Script or Concept" for "Count Off," which also garnered awards in the "Direction" and "Humor" categories. Kurtzman's "Boat" also received an award for "Humor" and for Dante Sabetta's excellent animation.



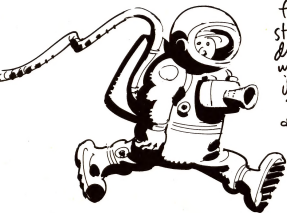
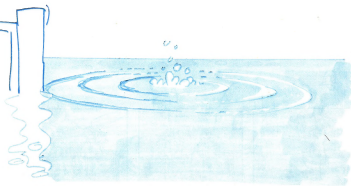


figure
statue-like...
doesn't
move —
just
floats,
& revolves.



the PLANETOID

THIS IS WHAT PROBABLY HAPPENED! LET US SAY THAT A GROUP OF SCIENTISTS LEFT EARTH, BOUND FOR A DISTANT STAR. AS THEIR HUNDRED-FOOT, NEEDLE-SHAPED GLEAMING SPACE SHIP SHOT UPWARD—



THE SPACE TRAVELERS UNSTRAPPED THEMSELVES FROM TAKE-OFF COUCHES AND SLIPPED INTO MAGNETIC BOOTS.



AS THEIR SHIP SPEEDED THROUGH THE VELVET BLACK VOID PROBABLY CLOSER TO THE SPEED OF LIGHT, THE SCIENTISTS MIGHT HAVE BECOME BORED.





OKAY WITH ME, MEN.
ONLY BE SURE YOU DON'T
BECOME DISLODGED
FROM THE SHIP OR YOU'LL
FLOAT AWAY!

RIGHT, SIR! LET'S
GO, SEELY!

I'LL
GET
THE
SPACE
GUIDE



'SEELY AND MARTIN DRESSED EXCITEDLY IN THEIR SPACE SUITS,
STEPPED INTO THE AIRLOCK, AND EMERGED OUT ONTO THE
HULL OF THEIR GLEAMING SPACE-CRAFT..'

MAKE SURE YOUR MAGNETIC
BOOTS GRAB HOLD BEFORE
YOU TAKE A STEP!

RIGHT! SAY, WHAT
PART OF THE GALAXY
ARE WE IN, ANYWAY,
MARTIN?



I'VE BEEN EAVESDROPPING
ON THE INTERCOM, SEELY.
WHY DO YOU ASK?

BECAUSE, SIR,
THERE'S A DIM
STAR UP AHEAD I
DON'T RECOG-
NIZE IT!



DIM STAR? HAW!
THAT'S STRANGE!
IT ISN'T INDICATED ON
THE ASTRO-CHARTS! HOLD
ON! I'LL SWITCH ON THE
RADAR. NO, NO, NO,
SCOPES! SCOPES!

SEELY!
LOOK!

WELL, I'LL
BE...

'THE TWO MEN OUTSIDE THE SHIP STARED IN FASCINATION AT THE PLANETOID AS THEY SPED PAST IT.'



COMMANDER! WE'RE PASSING A PLANETOID!

AND THAT DIM STAR UP AHEAD
SEEMS TO BE A MINATURE VERSION
OF OUR SUN!



THEN THE PLANETOID OUT THERE
IS ACTUALLY PART OF A MINATURE
SOLAR SYSTEM SIMILAR TO
OURS.

C'MON
BACK
INSIDE,
GONS! WE'RE
GOING TO
TAKE A CLOSER
LOOK!



'SEELY AND MARTIN RE-ENTERED THE SPACE SHIP
AND TOOK THEIR PLACES..'

ALL READY, SIR?

FIRE FORWARD
ROCKET THROTTLES!
SLOW SHIP!

FORWARD
ROCKETS
NOW
FIRING!



SET RADAR CONTROL
FOR AUTOMATIC APPROACH!
ACTIVATE GYRO/ SWING SHIP
AROUND TO VERTICAL 60°
HORIZONTAL 180°

RADAR
CONTROL
ON
AND
SOUNDING!

GYRO
ON!
COURSE
DIRECTIONS
LOCKED!



'THE SHIP REARED THE PLANETOID!..'

INSTANTLY TO PLANETOID
NOW... FIFTY MILES. ENTERING
WEAK GRAVITATIONAL FIELD.
RADAR SCOPES - ON!

'THE PLANETOID LOOKED GREEN AND CLEAR ON THE HUGE
SCOPE-SCREEN.'



LOOKS
GREEN, SIR!
VEGETATION APPAR-
ENT! LAND AND
WATER
FORMATIONS!

NO NEED TO
STRAP IN, MEN!
WE CAN GET DOWN ON
HER EASILY ENOUGH!
HER G-PULL IS
NEGIGIBLE!



HEAD FOR THAT
LARGE, GREEN
AREA, MARTIN!

SHE'S GOT
A DIAMETER OF
ROUGHLY TWELVE
MILES, SIR!

'THE SHIP STARTED TO A STOP ON THE SOFT GREEN SURFACE OF THE TINY PLANETOID...'



BETTER GET INTO YOUR SUITS MEN. THERE'S NOT ENOUGH ATMOSPHERE TO SUSTAIN US!

LOOK! YOU CAN ACTUALLY SEE THE CURVATURE!

'THE MEN STEPPED GINGERLY FROM THEIR TOWERING SHIP...'



TAKE IT EASY NOW! WITH SUCH A WEAK GRAV, YOU'RE LIKELY TO LEAD SIX HUNDRED FEET!

IT WOULD PROBABLY TAKE US LESS THAN A DAY'S MARCH TO CIRCLE THIS PLANET!



LOOK, COMMANDER! THE VEGETATION! IT'S LIKE MOSS... GROWS ABOUT TWO INCHES HIGH!

WAIT A MINUTE! I THOUGHT I SAW SOMETHING MOVING... BY YOUR FOOT!

'COMMANDER BLAINE REACHED DOWN AND PICKED UP THE TINY STRUGGLING BLACK BUG IN HIS GLOVED HAND...'



VERY SOFT... NOT HARD SHELLED, LIKE INSECTS BACK HOME!

PUT A MINE NEAR IT, COMMANDER!

'MARTIN TURNED ON HIS CHEST PICK-UP MIKE AND COMMANDER BLAINE HELD THE CAPTIVE INSECT CLOSE...'



GOOD LORD!

HOW HORRIBLE!

SCREAMING INSECTS!



LOOK HERE, CAPTAIN! BENEATH THIS MOSS! A NEST OF THEM!

THEY SEEM TO LIVE UNDER THOSE QUEERLY-SHAPED GROWTHS. LOOK HOW THEY SCRAMBLE ABOUT... AS IF THEY GEE UP.

COMMANDER! I'M PICKING UP MORE STRANGE SOUNDS ON MY CHEST MIKE! LISTEN! I'LL TUNE YOU IN!



OUNDS LIKE SOME SORT OF SIGNALS!

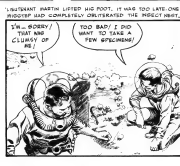
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I THOUGHT!



HELL MEN! SHALL WE EXPLORE FURTHER?

OKAY WITH ME!

WATCH OUT MARTIN!



'LIEUTENANT MARTIN LISTED HIS FOOT. IT WAS TOO LATE. ONE RIDGEBIT HAD COMPLETELY OBLITERATED THE INSECT NEST.'

I'M SORRY! THAT WAS CLUMSY OF ME!

TOO BAD! I DID WANT TO TAKE A FEW SPECIMENS!



SUPPHEE!

LOOK COMMANDER! UP THERE!

LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER KIND OF INSECT! A WINGED VARIETY!



THEY SEEM TO BE ATTACKING US!

THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO PENETRATE OUR SPACE SUITS!

'THE FLYING INSECTS CIRCLED THE SPACE-EXPLORERS...'



'SEELY SWUNG OUT AT ONE OF THE WINGED BEINGS AND HIT IT! IT SPIN TO THE GROUND...'



'THE SPACE TRAVELERS SCRAMBLED ACROSS THE GREEN HILLS TO THEIR WAITING SHIP...'



'THE SIGNAL WAS GIVEN AND THE NEEDLE-LIKE ROCKET WHIRLED SKYWARD, LEAVING THE TINY, INSECT-RIDDEN PLANET BEHIND...'



'EXACTLY RIGHT, GENERAL! THESE THIRTY FIVE HUNDRED FOOT MONSTERS YOUR JET PLANE PROVE BACK INTO THEIR SHIP AND OUT OF OUR LIVES, I HOPE, WERE ACTUALLY VISITORS FROM OUTER SPACE!'





3-D; MANY LEVELS

If you look at a 3-D comic through the special glasses provided, you'll notice that there are "layers" of art. The illusion of depth is **between** the layers only. On each particular layer, the art appears as flat as on an ordinary printed page. This, in fact, is one of the major criticisms of 3-D comics, that they have the unnatural appearance of a child's diorama which detracts rather than adds to the realism of the comic.

As a youngster I speculated that 3-D comics might indeed be created by the production of a series of cardboard cutouts (or illustrations on glass) actually set up in diorama fashion and photographed with two cameras in the way that 3-D movies are shot.

That speculation was actually not that far wrong. Here's how it's done.

The artist starts by penciling the page on an ordinary piece of art paper that has holes on the top margin which fit over the pegs of a special drawing board. When finished with the penciling, he makes notations on every figure and **object** that he's drawn as to which layer of depth that object **seemingly** appears on.

He then takes a celloid sheet, or "cel," the same kind that animators use, and places it over his penciled page, held in place by the holes at the top of the sheet fitting into the pegged board. He inks right on the cel all of the figures and objects that are to be on that particular layer, according to the numbered notations he's made.

The artist then removes the cel, places another cel on the pegged board, and inks the figures for a different level. He repeats the process for each level except for the deepest.

Just as in animation, each cel must be turned over and the areas inside the outlines of each figure and object must be opaque on the back. Since 3-D comics are a black and white medium, the opaque is done with white paint instead of the animator's color. This is necessary so that any drawings on the lower levels that might be behind the upper level do not show through the clear celloid.

The bottom level, usually the background for the scene, is drawn on art paper.

A single comic book page, then, represents a piece of art paper and three to five separate pieces of celloid. When the "page" is taken to the photoengraver, he photographs it once, and then (continued on page 99)

Note: The story used as an example here is "Spawn of Venus," illustrated by Wally Wood. It was intended for the same over published third 3-D EC comic that "The Planetoid" was scheduled to appear in. It was eventually published in 2-D in *Wildcat* #10, which is where the negatives were shot for this article. For a further discussion of the 3-D aspects of this story, see John Henson's letter in *Graphic Story Magazine* #11.



As proof of the fact that the artist had to draw a lot of material that was hidden by other levels, we defy you to find this charming street scene in the finished story.



Fig. 1. The base drawing is inked on Craftint illustration board over a very loose pencil sketch.



Fig. 2. The first cell creates the illusion of a giant jellylike blob with these few outlines, filled in with a dense pattern of white stip-a-tone dots through which the base level could be seen. The dots don't show up here because the cell was photographed against a white background.



Fig. 3. On the next cell the background figures and additional detail is inked, stip-a-tone added exactly as it would be on paper, and the reverse opaqued. A thin white circle of paint around each head, again largely invisible here because of the white background, creatively provides a space helmet.



IT SEEMS TO
SENSE US!

IT'S FOLLOWING
US!

Fig. 4. On the next level, even the balloons must be completely opaqued on the reverse.

IT MOVED TOWARDS THEM AT A MODERATE SPEED...
A HUGE COLLOSSEUS... A SHAPELESS MASS OF
PULSATING PROTOPLASM...

IT TRAVELED OVER THE GROUND, LEAVING
BARE BLACK SOIL WHERE VINES AND PLANTS
HAD GROWN... TURNING TOWARDS THEM...
A MASS OF NAUSEATING, UGLY, ILI-SMELLING FLERI...



copyright © 1970 by William M. Gaines.

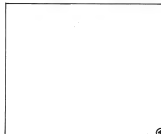


Fig. 5. The bulk of the lettering and the panel borders are inked on this cell, with everything outside the borders disappearing behind the most extensive opaquing of all.



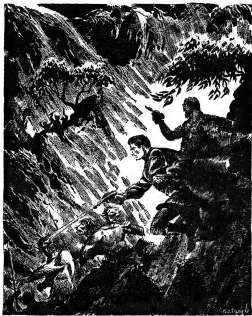
IT MOVED TOWARDS THEM AT A MODERATE SPEED...
A HUGE COLLOSSEUS... A SHAPELESS MASS OF
PULSATING PROTOPLASM...

IT TRAVELED OVER THE GROUND, LEAVING
BARE BLACK SOIL WHERE VINES AND PLANTS
HAD GROWN... TURNING TOWARDS THEM...
A MASS OF NAUSEATING, UGLY, ILI-SMELLING FLERI...



Fig. 7. Here are the two panels as they appear in the master shot.

Fig. 8. The topmost cell affords the artist the opportunity to give that magical illusion of figures jumping right out of the "page level" established on the cell preceding. Although this story has six levels of depth, most 3-D comics only had four.



In the biography of Graham Ingels which appeared in the first issue of *Saga* *Treant*, the earliest published art specifically mentioned was a job in the November 1946 *Horror Comics*. Actually, Ingels did quite a bit of material well before that date. He was associated with Fiction House for a time, and his work appeared in several of their pulp titles. For example, he did the cover and five interior pages for *Planet Stories* Vol. II, No. 6 (Spring 1943). For historical interest, we are presenting three of these illustrations here. The same issue also had a story by Ray Bradbury, "The Monster Maker," which unfortunately was illustrated by another artist. Unless there is pulp work we are not aware of, Ingels did not illustrate Bradbury until nearly ten years later, when he drew the comic version of "There Was an Old Woman" in *Tales from the Crypt* #34. Is there anyone reading this who has a set of Fiction House pulps and would be willing to make up an Ingels checklist?

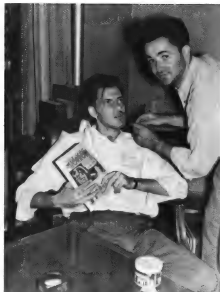
—JB





THE GHAULNATIC PHOTOS

TEXT BY PAUL KAST
PHOTO CAPTIONS BY JOHNNY CRAIG



These informal production photos were taken by Paul Kast, using my camera. When we were ready for the final photos, Paul switched to his Speed Graphic. Here Al is starting to build up the Vault Keeper's nose, as I hold a mag for him to work from.

People often speculate about what it would have been like to be at the scene of a great event—was it really exciting? Were the bystanders aware of the momentous goings-on? Can you imagine being present during the Gettysburg Address, the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the sinking of the Titanic? Well, I was not at any of these great events, but I was there when John Craig made himself up to look like the Ghoulardies—you know, the Crypt Keeper, the Vault Keeper and the Old Witch.

In 1960 through 1962 I was a struggling student at the Law School of New York University. I had the good fortune of having the famous William M. Gaines, publisher of *Mad* magazine, as a family friend. In 1960 when Gaines was not so famous, he was busy struggling as mastermind of Entertaining Comics, with the infamous titles, *Tales from the Crypt*, *The Vault of Horror*, *Modern Love* and other delicacies. Perceiving me as a fellow struggler, he gave me a job as his "assistant." I was involved in story conferences, errands, squirt gun fights, chaffing and miscellaneous hell-raising.

During this period, I met and kibitzed with the now legendary writer-artists Al Feldstein and John Craig. I can remember the day Feldstein was preparing a *Weird Science* story involving a conversation between two Marians. Without hesitation, he pencilled in some weighty dialogue: "Squa Troat!" This verbiage is now immortal. In my opinion, it really meant nothing then and it means nothing now. It is not French, German, Yiddish, Chinese, or anything else. Did Feldstein really know some deep (possibly sinister) meaning?

It is about 1951, when the horror titles were wildly successful, three characters emerged that the fan public almost believed to be alive. One hot day I suggested to Bill Gaines that we start a mail order business involving photographs of these fictional beings. He agreed. If I would handle the whole thing, leaving no details for him. This was and is a typical "Gainesian" reaction: "Do what you want, but *you* do it!"

The plan was discussed over lunch. Craig would be the horrible model (Good Lord!). I was to get a wig which I subsequently rented in a theatrical store in midtown Manhattan. A wig was a strange and rare item back in 1961.

That evening, after we set up my 2½ x 3½ Speed Graphic camera and put floodlights in Gaines' green-rugged 1940 style office at 225 Lafayette Street in the "Little Italy" section of New York City, Johnny got into the spirit of the thing by gluing paper finger nails on his hands and adding pencil lines to his face. A cape, toothpaste-type makeup, and the grey wig rounded out the scene which resulted in dozens of poses and costume variations. I went home that evening and developed and enlarged the pictures, which Craig then autographed with three Ghoulardie signatures.

A printer made up about 10,000 glossy type reproductions. For the next year or so, Feldstein platted the pictures in the texts of his horror titles. The three pictures were tagged at the pre-inflation price of 10¢ each, or three for 25¢, postage included—with the mail-order address being my home in Merrick, New York.

The dimes and quarters rolled in and we earned a couple of thousand dollars which Bill kindly let me keep to cover my union expenses. The photos linger on—to this day my mother still lives in Merrick and still receives inquiries about the pictures, and an occasional dime or quarter addressed to "the Old Witch" (which name she does not appreciate) still drifts in. The pictures were so successful that I threw a party for Gaines, Feldstein, Craig and their wives in 1962 at Manna Leone's restaurant in New York City. It was something like an organized crime convention, but merely involving the publication of comic books and Ghoulardie pictures.

This is the end of the story. I went my separate way after graduating from school. Every so often, however, I get together with Bill Gaines and we talk about the old days.

—Paul Kast



When I took this shot of Al Feldstein horsing around, the flashbulb exploded. No one was hurt, but an instant later his expression was entirely different.



When it became evident that the job might become messy, we moved from Bill's office into the stockroom, which had towels and running water. Here, the Crypt Keeper is taking shape.



Al adjusts an old chunk of corduroy for the VK's costume. The table is powered to look dusty.

I look angry here but I'm not. It's just the make-up.



Just about ready here. That candle is sitting in Bill Gaines' ashtray, with the glass inner receptacle removed. I can't remember what we used to black out my teeth, nor what we used for a backdrop.





Fingernails were cut out of paper and rubber cemented into place.



"Hurry up, you idiot! My fingernails are burning!"



JEKYLL-HYDE of the COMICS

In 1947, William Gaines inherited \$1,000,000 and an unsuccessful group of comic magazines. He was 25 years old, and the combination of youth and money proved irresistible. He decided to try to rewrap the magazines into money-making propositions.

How? His answer: horror stories! Purveying horror to the kiddies had earned Gaines the enmity of rival publishers, PTA's, and prominent psychiatrists. But it also boosted the sales of his magazines to over a million copies per month.

When asked to defend the lurid contents of such comics titles as *Fault of Horror*, *Tales from the Crypt*, etc., Gaines replied:

"Our magazines are written for adults. It isn't our fault if the kids read 'em, too."

However, there is a Jekyll-Hyde personality at work in Gaines' magazines.

For along with frankly sensational, often revolting "horror stories," Gaines also publishes comics stories which make a bold and welcome plea for racial tolerance. (See *illustration opposite*).

These stories which appear in his regular horror monthlies, are, by contrast, well written, well plotted, ruthless in their revelation of a kind of horror that lies close beneath the surface of life in modern America.

In this story, a Korean veteran denounces fellow-townsmen who have refused decent burial to his comrade.



PUBLICITY FOLIO: Several magazine articles about the EC comics appeared during their peak years, such as the one reproduced here from *Topps #1*, March 1954. *Topps* was a short-lived general interest digest (the first issue featured Gm Lohengrin on the cover), and had no connection with the earlier *Low* (Gaines' comic magazine of the same title). Its Editorial Director was William "Boss" Loefer, long time friend of Bill Gaines and an occasional writer for EC, which may explain how this article came to appear. Turn the page for another article from the same period.

The June 1964 issue of *Pageturn* magazine featured a spread on *Mad* comics that not only reprinted four representative pages (from "Prince Violent," "Sherlock Bones," "Flesh Garden," and "The Lone Stranger"), but also had a drawing by Bill Elder which was done especially for the piece. To fans, this was the first "official" recognition that *Mad* was as great as they believed. This article stood alone among the countless others denouncing comics as the cause of juvenile delinquency that were appearing simultaneously in all kinds of periodicals. With this article, we knew that *Mad* had it made.

Harvey Kurtzman and the rest of the *Mad* staff must have had much the same feeling, because this coverage was completely unsolicited on their part. It was a *Pageturn* editor, Harold Hayes, who ferreted out the *Mad* phenomenon and approached them with the idea for the piece (and also wrote the brief text). This was the beginning of a long association between Kurtzman and Hayes. When Hayes later became editor of *Esquire*, he often used material by Kurtzman.

—JB



NOW COMICS HAVE GONE MAD

■ IN THE COMIC book business, where 350 titles are published monthly and everybody follows trends, a very unusual comic book—called *Mad*—has emerged as the leader of the latest trend. *Mad* is satirical and it's funny. And in a field normally dominated by horror and violence, this is such an un-

usual twist that *Mad*, in only 11 issues, has soared to a circulation of 750,000 issues and inspired at least 10 imitations (*Crazy, Wild, Whack, Riot, Flip, Get Lost, Bug House, Mad House, Nuts and Eh!*).

Like *Li'l Abner* and *Pogo*, the comic directs its appeal largely to the adult reader rather than the

lollipop set, its satires extending to institutions (right) and personalities (below) alike. Edited by 30-year-old Harvey Kurtzman, *Mad* is supplied with material by only three artists: Bill Elder, Wallace Wood and Jack Davis.

For a sample of the madness in the latest trend, keep turning.





THE E.C. FANZINES

PART ONE: THE GELATIN YEARS

The very first fan publication about comics was Ted White's *The Story of Superman*. This little 4"x5" mimeographed pamphlet was also the very first publication of any kind by the fan who later produced many top science fiction fanzines, including *Zip*, *Void* and *Stellar*, and is now a novelist and the editor of the fanzine-oriented press *Amazing* and *Fantastic*.

The Story of Superman was small sized because it was printed on a postcard mimeograph, which was all Ted owned in the way of printing equipment for several years. (A postcard mimeograph is a very small machine intended for printing club meeting notices and such on postcards.) It went through four printings, the final one being retitled *The Facts Behind Superman*, and each was better printed and gave a more complete history than the one before. (A "fifth and last edition" was advertised in the fifth issue of Ted's fanzine *Zip*, but this is probably due to a different method of counting "editions".)

In fact, the early editions did not receive much circulation beyond a few of Ted's friends, and were primarily experiments in stenciling artwork, with written material added as a connective thread. A few copies of the first three editions were stapled

together and sold as a set for ten cents. Even the final edition had a very small sale, and one can speculate that fewer than 50 copies were ever distributed.

The first edition came out in the summer of 1952 and the last edition was probably in late 1953 or early 1954. An ad for the third edition is in *The EC Fan Bulletin* #2 (October 1953) and the last edition was advertised in *Bookah W!* (October 1954), although this ad was editor Ron Parker's idea, and a mistake, the booklet having been out of print for some time.

The Facts Behind Superman is 22 pages, including 3 1/2 pages of ads. The cover is four colors, which means it was run through the mimeograph four times; black for the title and Superman figure, red and then blue for the costume. For the fourth "pass" Ted tried an interesting experiment, one that he and others repeated later; he distributed red, yellow and blue ink simultaneously in patches across the drum and used a "scone" stand made with a cross-hatch shading plate. The resulting multicolored background behind the figure was quite striking.

The text, by White, Ronald Graham and Eldon Everett, traced both the life of the character and the strip. There were



7 FACTS N E BEHIND SUPERMAN

BY TED E. WHITE, RONALD GRAHAM, & ELTON EVERETT

CONTENTS

Chap.	Page
1 HIS ORIGIN	5
2 BEFORE SUPERMAN	6
3 AFTER SUPERMAN	7
4 THE FICTIONAL ORIGIN OF SUPERMAN	8
5 SUPERSTY	9
6 SUPERMAN'S GROWTH IN THE COMICS	10
7 SUPERMAN IN THE MOVIES	13
8 SUPERMAN ON RADIO & TV	14
9 SUPERMAN'S EFFECT ON THE COMICS	15
10 SUPERMAN'S ENEMIES	17
11 SUPERMAN'S SUPER EXPLOITATION	18
12 SUPERMAN IN HARD COVERS	18

CORRECTION TO CHAPTER 3 15
ADVERTISEMENTS 19, 20, 21, 22

COVER and interior art by Ted E. White

THE FACTS BEHIND SUPERMAN: Text by Eldon E. Everett, Ronald Graham and Ted E. White. Edited and published by Ted E. White at 1014 South Turkstone St., Falls Church, Va. 10¢

two illustrations, one showing Superman as different artists depicted him and one tracing the evolution of Superman's emblems and logos. Quite a lot of information is packed into these small pages.

Ted's introduction states, "There are omissions and errors. I have no doubt. But this is the most complete publication on Superman you will find." True, there are errors. But this publication's historical value as a "first" is matched by an equally historic successful effort to write seriously about comic books, for, prior to this time, there had been virtually no publications of any kind devoted to this subject.

The **Facts Behind Superman** was a one-sheet. The first regular comic fanzine title was still not an EC fizzle—**Fantasy Comics** needed Bob Stewart's **The EC Fan Bulletin** by several months. This is self evident from the fact that the **Bulletin's** first issue mentions "Fantasy Comics, the newspaper of the SF comic field, which is edited by Lane Stanford, to secure a copy send \$6 to Fandom House, c/o James Tarnai." Tarnai is self-centered as the editor of the long-running **Fantasy Times**, a regularly published paper of news in the science fiction field that was established in 1941 and continued into the late fifties. Apparently in early 1953 Tarnai decided to bring out an offshoot which would do for comics what **Fantasy Times** did for sci magazines. The name "Lane Stanford" was one of several pseudonyms used by Tarnai in his fan publishing.

Fantasy Comics published news items on all the science fiction comics including DC, Ziff-Davis, etc., and although the EC science fiction titles were given good coverage, being the best in the field, EC's own titles were barely ignored. Bill Spicer in his 1965 **Guidebook to Comics Fandom** describes **Fantasy Comics** as a "yearly that ran for about six months," but Ted White recalls that there were about a dozen issues.

Fantasy Comics' readership was made up of science fiction fans rather than comic fans. Furthermore, **Fantasy Comics** used a newspaper format (even though 8 1/2 x 11") and a writing style heavy with the conventions common to first year journalism classes and small newspapers. It was really a news publication, and it is safe to say that although it was technically the first, it was not "the father" of comic book fanzines. The first true comic fanzine was **The EC Fan Bulletin**, published by Bob Stewart in the early summer of 1953.

One day a hit me, a flash that I should be doing a fanzine—not about science fiction, since there were hundreds of them—but about the thing I was most interested in, EC comics," Bob says. At the time the idea came to him, he was already at work on a science fiction fanzine, to be titled **Fanzine**, in collaboration with Bobby Gene Warner, a fellow fan who lived 14 miles up the road from Bob's home in Kirbyville, Texas who Bob had met through the letter pages of **Imagination**. However Bob immediately switched over to working on the **Fan Bulletin** and so, as with Ted White and **Superman**, the **Bulletin** was Bob's first true publication of any kind.

And, like Ted, Bob was to find professionally involved with publications that relate back to his first publishing interests. The EC influence is most evident in his underground comic **Tales from the Fringe**, his co-edited "Nostalgia Press" hardcover **EC Horror Comics Volume**, and his **Wacky Packages** and other card series for Topps Chewing Gum. As editor, art director, writer or artist (or in combination), Bob has also contributed to **Castle of Frankenstein**, TV Guide, **Flashback**, **Cavalier**, **The Realist**, and **Charlton**, Warren and Marvel comic series, and other publications.

About five years before **The EC Fan Bulletin**, when Bob was still in grammar school in Lexington and Greenswood, Mississippi (the Stewarts made several moves in the South and Southwest during his childhood), he produced a weekly hand-

written publication called **The Natty Newspaper** for two years. Like Charles and Robert Crumb's childhood comics, each issue of the **Newspaper** had only one copy, the original, which was passed from hand to hand among Bob's schoolies. A regular feature was a strip titled "L.S. Steps," somewhat influenced by Harvey Kurtzman's "Hey Look" strips and the work of Virgil Partch (who himself had been involved with fandom a decade earlier), but based more closely on Carl Anderson's "Henry." When **The Natty Newspaper** was appearing, EC had not yet started their New Trend talks, but even earlier Bob had read **Land of the Lost**—because he knew the radio program.

It wasn't long after that Bob became an avid reader of science fiction, and by the time he was in his first year in high school he was deeply immersed in fandom (in those days before other fandoms proliferated to create the issue of fandom was known only as "fandom"), corresponding with many fans and doing occasional illustrations for fanzines.

One fanzine of the period that Bob contributed to, **Mete**, had a column by Dick Lapid. An issue of the pro **Fanzine** **Story Magazine** let letters from Bobby Gene Warner, Bob and Calvin Beck (now publisher of **Castle of Frankenstein**) next to each other.

Another issue of the same magazine published letters from two Bob Stewarts, the other one being from California. To avoid confusion in fandom, the California fan adopted the name Bob Stewart, while Bob picked up "the fanzine h" to commonly seen in words like ghod and wheer. Later Bob wrote a story for Bob's fanzine **See** as the theme of "too many Bob Stewarts."

Eventually, Bob stopped reading science fiction and devoted all of his time to fandom. The creative aspect of fandom fascinated him, just as it has others before and since; instead of just reading, one actually does the publishing.

To publish **Fanzine** Bob had purchased the best photograph kit he could find through the mail for about \$15, which was maybe just a little more than he could afford. With sophisticated offset lithography now in common use for fanzines, it's doubtful that today's readers even know what photograph reproduction is. A photograph master is made in a similar fashion to a lithographic master. The master is then placed ink-side down in a little pan or framework of special gelatin pods until the ink is absorbed completely into the gelatin. Then sheets of paper are placed by hand on the gelatin one at a time and a little bit of the ink is absorbed onto each sheet.

Like dials, multiple colors can be used in a single "print run." This appealed to Bob, because he was very interested in doing some 3-D illustrations, using red and blue and having readers see glasses they'd gotten from commercial comics. Bob cannot see 3-D himself because of an eye in faulty, so producing a 3-D drawing was quite a challenge for him.

When **Fanzine** did come out, several months after the second issue of **The EC Fan Bulletin**, it featured two 3-D illustrations, a first for a fanzine. One was a drawing of a spaceship by Martin Jukovsky, adapted for 3-D by Bob; the other was a "joke," a Virgil Finlay-esque nude by Bob which, when one put on the special glasses, appeared to have a three foot long breast.

Fanzine's one issue, incidentally, was much bigger than **Bulletin**, and featured a lengthy and amusing parody of space opera fiction by Jim Harzane, fiction and art by Bobby Gene Warner and other articles and features. Warner was not only a good fan artist, he could also sit down and type off a Bradburyish story non-stop, and his work appeared in many fanzines of that period.

But in the Spring of 1953, work on **Fanzine** seemed to be going slowly. For one thing, Warner had put the stencil in his typewriter backwards, and had to type the whole thing over. Also, they were having trouble getting together. So one advantage of Bob's EC fanzine idea was that it would be his

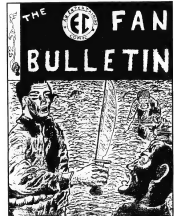
alone.

He knew from his experience in fandom that an EC fanzine wouldn't be of any interest to science fiction people, so he wrote a letter to EC, which was published in the letter page of **Weird Science** #29 (July-August 1953):

I am making plans to establish a small fanzine to be called "The EC Fan Bulletin." It will probably cost about 10¢ and come out bi-monthly. With your cooperation, it would carry announcements of future plans, answers to questions, news of new artists, etc. What do you think of the idea? I'd like to hear from other fans about it too.

About 80 people responded to Bob's letter, which, it turned out, was very fortunate, because 80 is about the maximum number of legible copies that a photograph is able to produce. Bob was much enthused by the response, and, without a thought to posterity, he quickly got down to work and produced the first issue of **The EC Fan Bulletin**.

Bill Spicer had sent Bob some samples of his art and Bob took note of its similarity to Al Feldstein's work. This was hardly surprising, because Spicer was then and still is a big fan of Feldstein's art. Bob decided to have a cover in the style of an EC comic with Spicer doing the art. He sent the assignment out to Spicer for the second issue, and then sat down himself to do a cover in the style of Jack Davis for the first issue.



Bob had only started to draw around this time, and, in his editorial he commented, "This issue's cover is supposedly in the technique of Davis. That Korean fellow has his left arm broken at the shoulder and can't lift it which is a crude slip for the fact that I didn't put any artist in the scene."

The opening editorial of the nine page issue began along fairly typical lines: "Clatched in your grimy little fist is the first issue..." However, after a brief obligatory description of the future plans of the **Bulletin**, Bob got down to two pages of interesting news and editorial comment, typically combined in

the following passage:

Article in the July PAGEANT entitled "Give the Kids their Blood and Thunder" as comic books which you might find interesting. Brings up the old comic book-daily tale analogy... In the same ish are a number of drawings by Basil Wolverton from his new book, COMIC TYPES OF BARBLEE (copyrighted, Berlitz, Portland, Oregon). If I were given my money as an artist that I would like to start working for EC, I would choose Wolverton, who, by the way, was the winner of Al Caplan's Lena the Hyena contest. Years ago he was turning out comic book stories of the same type as those in MAD featuring a character called Powerhouse Pepper. Last year he was doing serious work and a feature called "Jungle Japes" for WEIRD TALES OF THE FUTURE (the fellow that published that mag has a neat system; about six months after they have published a comic story they reprint it without saying that it's a reprint, or out parts of the story and there and send them into a new story—concentrated which the readers will see. Last issue of him, he was doing a feature called "Supernatural Sam" for a cartoon-gig mag (COMEDY, I think). EC, you've got to get Bob! I hereby elect myself president of the W.W.W. (We Want Wolverton) Club. When PANU is under way, a new artist will be needed. It, by 1954 AM April 14, 1954 Wolverton has not had a story in PANIC or MAD. The We Want Wolverton Storm Troopers will storm Room 706 and steal every one of Mr. Lee's cigars.

The last comment is quite interesting, and one wonders whether Bob's suggestion was a factor in EC's using Wolverton. In fact, Wolverton's first EC appearance, in **Mad** #10, dated April 1954, came out well before his deadline. **Weird Tales of the Future** had a letter page, curiously enough, and actually published a letter from Bob as well as one of their remembered stories in the #7, May-June 1953 issue. Bob rated the stories, EC style, and commented, "The only reason I read your crummy book is because of Wolverton."

Bob also mentioned in his editorial that Bill Spicer had once contemplated doing an EC fanzine, but had abandoned the idea, and the John Waver of East Haddam, Connecticut was planning one (which presumably never materialized). And in the way of comment, the editorial contained a brief complaint about the loose plots that EC was overrating at the time.

Most of the newsletters in the **Bulletin** were sent to New York from Martin Jukovsky and George Stowden III, both of whom had responded to Bob's **Weird Science** letter and offered to contribute. A few items were also lifted (with credit) from **Fantasy Comics**.

Many Jukovsky had obtained his newsmen by making a personal visit to EC, and asking Al Feldstein and Bill Gaines questions. They didn't seem especially prepared for visitors, so his was probably one of the earlier fan pilgrimages. It was common for science fiction fans to visit the offices of the pulp magazines at the time, and Marty and Dave Michonick, another New York fan, had visited several offices, including **Amazing** and **Startling Stories**. Marty merely carried the practice over to his comic book interests.

On that first visit to EC, Marty was accompanied by Trina, the same who is now a San Francisco underground cartoonist. Marty and Dave had met Trina through the letter pages of **Startling Stories** in 1951 or 1952. They formed an organization called "The Science Fiction Club of New York," which was written up in the Queens Neighborhood Section of the **Sunday News**. The club met regularly in Dave's basement, and had several other intermittent members in addition to Dave, Trina and Marty.

Marty made several follow-up visits to the EC offices. One time he chatted with Kurtzman as Kurtzman prepared his rough sketch script for the **Mad** story "Sherlock Holmes." Another time he was shoed out because they were preparing

for the 1953 Christmas party (the film that Kurtzman took at that party were shown at the 1972 EC Convention).

Marty and Dave continued to be very active in science fiction fandom until the late fifties, being leading members, along with another EC fan, Larry Irv, in the "Metrolan" group. Marty is now a proofreader and sometime film editor; he's also written film reviews for the *Metrolan*, a Maryland newspaper. He still maintains some contact with Bobb and other fans, and even dropped in at the New York Comic Art Convention for a few hours.

The EC Fan Bulletin news notes included an announcement that Mad would go monthly, and that EC would publish 3-D comics, with details of which stories would be done. Apparently at that time no other 3-D comics were on the stands, because Bobb ends with a "hope no other comic publishers beat you to it follows."

From EC's point of view, Bobb's most startling revelation was their new title *Panic*, including the information that "a first title consideration which was completely rejected was This Comic Book Is Pathetic."

"He revealed the title *Panic* at a time we thought only three people knew. If Bill Still haven't figured out how he knew" was EC's comment in the *Fan-Addict Bulletin* #1 that Fall. Apparently it had not occurred to them that a New York fan visiting their offices might be in cahoots with a Texas fanzine publisher.

A letter from James Taurasi in *Weird Fantasy* #19 (May-June 1953) announced a forthcoming Fan Veterans Convention, and the *Fan Bulletin* gave an interesting report on the proceedings:

At the Fan-Vet Convention on April 19th, Bill Gaines spoke on WEIRD SCIENCE and WEIRD FANTASY. He told of how back in 1950 Harry Harrison (now editor of *ROCKET STORIES*) suggested that Bill begin publishing an adult sci mag. Bill scoffed at this idea, but later took it seriously when EC began their comics after the collapse of the comic industry in 1950. At that time the only comic was *PLANET COMICS*, a science space mag (cowboys 'n' Indians on rockets). After the appearance of WF and WS many space-opera comics materialized, none of which were true imitations because they did not present the same kind of sci.

Accompanying Gaines were Feldstein, Williams, Kamen, Orlando and Wood, who answered questions from the floor—also from the audience (blame Jakovsky, that's his pag, not mine—ho). On exhibit was a story by Wood, entitled "My World," which will appear in one of the sci mags shortly. EC fans who attended the convention considered it the best effort to come from Room 706 thus far. Gaines also announced that WS will go quarterly with issue 23 and WF with 22 due to lack of sales. The war mags are losing money also.

An auction of various art artwork was held, in which Wallace Wood purchased some art of Williams. Wally is a great admirer of AF's work. Fifteen copies of WS 18, autographed by Gaines, Feldstein and the artists who had work in it were auctioned off. Two-hundred copies of the same issue were donated by EC to the Fantasy Veterans Association (who hold the con), to be mailed along with other sci to the science overseas in the US Armed Services. All profits from the con were used for mailing the mags overseas.

"The EC Offices," a 2 1/2 page piece by George Snowden III, is an exhaustive but dull physiology of 207's layout, complete with detailed floor-plan. Bobb did his best to live it up with humorous interludes, but it remains inferior to the countless "visit to EC" type articles that followed it in other EC fanzines.

About ten years after the *Bulletin* came out, Bobb, who by that time was living in New York, felt nostalgic and phoned George Snowden III, one of the few subscribers whose name he

could remember. Snowden said, "Oh, I threw away all my EC's when I got married," and cut the conversation short, so he was just leaving the house for an appointment.

Strangely enough, the only copy of *Fan Bulletin* #1 that has been unearthed as this article was being written was the one originally sent to Snowden. Fans of that time can easily be so identified because they were usually mailed without an envelope, with the address on the back cover. The copy of the *Bulletin* #2 that was used for this article, incidentally, was originally mailed to The Entertaining Comics Group. It seems that around 1967, Jerry Weiss and Rich Huser were talking with Bill Gaines and he recalled a very wealthy fan with two complete collections: Snowden, Jerry and Rich wrote to Snowden, who gave them the bad news about his collection, but did send on all he had left: his membership kit, a very rare pair of EC cuff links, and his copy of *Bulletin* #1.

The issue also contained the foreword of "The EC Fan of the Issue" series that later appeared in *Honk* and still later in the later day *Saga* Tronch. The editor's "Autobiography" begins with the inevitable "I was born very young..." and continues in this vein with a series of facts and pages. A few of the older facts:

I lived in the town where Al Feldstein was married, which is Rhyolville, Ark., in 1947. (Al was there in 1943.) I've also lived in the hometown of Mickey Spillane's wife, Greenwood, Mississippi. (That's her maiden name—now it's Greenwood Spillane.)

The elements of self parody, the puns and asides that are liberally scattered throughout *The EC Fan Bulletin* show the influence not only of Kurtzman's *Mad*, which was using very similar kinds of puns at the time, but also of Feldstein's *Ghouls*, who were making interludes similar to Bobb's in their letter pages, and Bob and Ray, Stan Freberg and H. Allen Smith. Several fan writers, particularly Dean A. Gremmler and Shelby Vink (whose *Confusion* was the first fanzine Bobb ever saw), were also an influence.

Bobb realized that most EC fans were not science fiction fans, and so he decided to take advantage of his dual interest and run a piece on the EC-Ray Bradbury adaptations. He ran an index on the first 20 of these (the other 10 he had not yet appeared), including the original source of each story. His research included (with credit) William Nolan's "The Ray Bradbury Index" from *The Ray Bradbury Review*. Bobb's data and format was later used by Fred van Bernswijk in all editions of his *EC Checklist* (with credit and permission). Bobb filled out the rest of the Bradbury page with information about radio and movie versions of those stories.

Rounding out the issue are some indifferent cartoons by Nigel Kadell, a half page report on "The Prince EC Fan Club," a one page questionnaire for readers to fill out... and a few interludes, like the "Saga Tronch" "Sip Fun."

The second issue of *The EC Fan Bulletin* came out approximately three months later (it was mailed on October 14, 1953), and is a much more professional item, largely because of Bill Spicer's magnificent three color cover, which is probably unsurpassed by anything else published in sciography.

Bobb had decided that for best reproduction, Bill should do his cover directly onto the master, which meant that Bill had to purchase the masters and special ink (which, after visiting five stores, he finally found), and also had to experiment with a medium new to him without the benefit of seeing his graduate work "ran off." Bill worked out a series of complicated steps, first drawing the cover on a sheet of typing paper, then covering the back of that sheet with solid graphite using a soft lead pencil, then placing his paper on the master and tracing his drawing, leaving a light impression on the master, which, finally, he inked, carefully dipping his best Winsor Newton brush into the foul smelling keto lins.

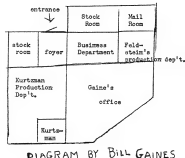
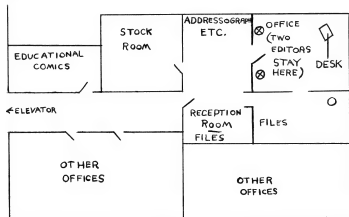


DIAGRAM BY BILL GAINES



Floorplans of the EC offices appeared in various EC fanzines. Top left: from *Honk* #2 (Dec. 1955-Jan. 1956), accompanied by Ron Parker. Top right: sketch by George Snowden III that appeared with his article in *The EC Fan Bulletin* #1, described in the accompanying text. Below: diagram by Bill Meyers which ran with "A Visit to EC" by Stan Grossman in *Potomac* #4 (1955).



© COMPLETE FILES OF ALL E.C.'s EVER PUBLISHED
© WHERE I FOUND JOHNNY CRAIG, JUST STARTING THE FIRST "EXTRA"



IN THIS ISSUE

Checking through the 372 pages of the first four issues of *Squa Trout*, I was amazed to find not one significant mention of **Mad** comics. Harvey Kurtzman's original sketches for other projects, which ran in the fourth issue, were the only items that were even distantly related. Yet, as a 1983 poll that is reprinted elsewhere in this issue indicates, **Mad** was far and away the most popular EC comic, almost from its first issue. The **Mad** comics received their full share of coverage in the EC fanzines of the period, but for some reason they have been neglected in the current fanzines.

We intend to change that trend, and have started in this issue by reprinting a spread by Bill Elder of all the old **Mad** characters. In future issues, there'll be more on **Mad**, and more on Bill Elder, one of EC's great artists, who came into his own in **Mad**. It was Harvey Kurtzman's **Mad** that liberated a generation from the hazy aspects of the mass culture dominated society of the Fifties by examining that culture through the magnifying glass of parody and satire. Many of the underground comic book artists were part of that generation, and many publicly express their debt to Kurtzman.

Recently a group of underground artists produced, under the editorship of Jay Lynch, a hilarious and loving recreation of the old **Mad** comics in the form of *Tales Calculated to Sell You Biju* #8, a full color underground comic in which they use the Kurtzman format to parody each other's creations. In a way, the book is both a parody of the **Mad** comics and a parody of the underground comic characters. For example, *Sheet* starts his "Sneaky Melvin Snot" (a parody of Skip Williamson's "Sneaky Snot") with exactly the same situation and page layout as Kurtzman's "Little Orphan Melvin" in **Mad** #6. The buxom of *Biju*, by Ralph Reese, borrows its format from the opening page of Kurtzman's "Julius Caesar" in **Mad** #17. And Harvey Kurtzman himself does a brilliant cover for *Biju* #8, as much a comment on the Severins as the cover of **Mad** #4, on which it is based, spoke to readers in the Fifties.

It could have been a confusing failure, but it all works fantastically, and is absolutely the funniest stuff to appear since its inspiration disappeared from the newsstands twenty years ago.

Many people have tried to imitate the Kurtzman brand of humor, and the result has usually been a dismal flop. These comic cartoonists are the first who have really understood the techniques of Kurtzman's total parody assault on both the style and content of the material parodied. Parody of a drawing style is particularly difficult to pull off; too often the parody seems a mere imitation. But Robert Crumb's parody of Jay Lynch's overworked backgrounds, and Bill Griffith's careful recreation of Kim Deitch's long armed characters inhabiting panels that proliferate within panels are enormously funny.

The only qualification that must be made about *Biju* #8 is that the mighty labor that went into it will only be truly appreciated by a very small audience: those who are both familiar with underground comics and Kurtzman's **Mad**.

Biju #8 is available for 90¢ from The Caricaturists Co.-Op Press, P.O. Box 49474, San Francisco, California 94110 (you must be over 18, state age) or from your favorite underground comics distributor.

Some of you may feel that this whole issue of *Squa Trout* is a little heavy on nostalgia and light on the serious constructive stuff that the editor has been known to do in the past. No apology is made for that. This issue has been enormous fun to produce, and the pleasure gained from its production is the only excuse for its existence.

Possibly the most ingrown article of all is Part I of *The History of EC Fanzines*, and naturally this was the most pleasure of all to write. Just who will want to read it, we're not sure, but those who do should find the series exhaustive by the time it's finished. Actually, science fiction fandom's history has been chronicled in

full length books—Larry Warner's *All Our Yesterdays* and Sam Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm*—but this is the first extensive review of comic fandom we know of.

We'd like to remind readers that the old EC fanzines were produced purely for the love of it and were often given away at no cost for the cost of postage and paper. If this article results in the selling of a collector's "piece" on these old fanzines, then the author has committed a grievous sin. Lend them, trade them, give out xerox copies, or wait until *Squa Trout* reprints the worthwhile material from them, but don't offer them for sale, or put a price on their heads as though they were wanted criminals. If you do, the great god Ghy, a powerful Finnish deity of the Fifties, will rid you of your EC's and give you the cramps.

The GhyLunatic photo piece is another piece of blatant neo-realist trash that so is the title "Ghy Bro", for that matter. In last issue's reprint of John Severin's "Thank you for your note" EC staff panorama, there's a young man in the exact center carrying a basket of apples. This is Paul Kael, and the basket is undoubtedly the one he made selling GhyLunatic photos. He has kindly retold the whole story for us, although he did get a few of his facts wrong. The mailing address for the photos was the EC offices, not his home. Bill Gaines recalls that Kael's sister Ruby would carry the orders home each day, and the photos would be mailed out from Merrick.

CODING IN FUTURE ISSUES

Our next issue will feature a 20 page interview with Bernard Kravitz, recently updated, with complete accompanying illustrations. The original 300 copy print run of this extraordinary conversation has long been out of print, and it much deserves the wider distribution that *Squa Trout* will give it.

Accompanying the interview will be a detailed and very perceptive analysis of Kravitz's famous story "The Master Race," written by Art Spiegelman. Spiegelman is an underground cartoonist whose best work is fully as extraordinary and ground breaking today as Kravitz's work was twenty years ago. His last page story about his mother's suicide, "Prisoner on the Hell Planet," is a powerful work, the finest thing to appear in comic form in many years. "Prisoner" is hidden in the back of *Short Order Comics*, which is available for 60¢ from Caricaturists Co.-Op Press (see address above) or your favorite underground comics dealer.

A list of material is lined up for future issues, much of it already on hand: a portfolio of Al Williamson sketches, including preliminary roughs for several EC stories; fascinating cover results and ideas that Ray Knecht once did for Greeng and Kerie; a photo article of the EC offices in 1964 by Larry Jue; more rare Kurtzman material; an essay on Severin and Elder's "American Eagle" series for *Prime Comics Western*; a special checklist of **Mad** comics reprints compiled by Fred von Bernewitz; coverage of the animated films of Jack Davis; a feature on the EC like Harvey horror comics of the Fifties, and, of course, more history and reprints from the original EC fanzines, and lots more rare art by all of the great EC artists. Eventually we'll be spreading out to cover other, non-EC related, comics material.

Future issues of *Squa Trout* will have a letters page, gang, so let us know what you liked and hated about this issue, and why. We're also interested in letters of general interest, discussing topics brought up in this issue, or relating to EC or comic art in general.

PLUGS

There are several plugs we'd like to make which we weren't able to work into the main body of the editorial. First, if you like *Squa Trout*, you may enjoy these other excellent quality fanzines:

Graphic Story Magazine #16 has a long interview with comic artist Howard Nostrand by Ibbot Stewart (this too is in node) with the upcoming *Squa Trout* Harvey horror comics article. Nostrand being one of their star artists. There are also comics by Worcester, Metzger, and more. Price: \$1.20 per issue, or \$5 for four issues. Order from Bill Spier, 325 North Avenue 66, Los Angeles, California 90042.

Funnyworld is published by Mike Barrier, who is our opinion is the best of those who are currently writing about comics. In earlier issues, **Funnyworld** often focused attention on the masterful work of Carl Barke (creator of Uncle Scrooge), but it has recently devoted more space to coverage of animated cartoons. Barke does intend to continue coverage of comics, however, and the extraordinary high literate standard of his publication makes it a must. The latest issue, #15, contains the second part of Barrier's thorough and fascinating "Filing of Fritz the Cat," and a part of his continuing detailed Barke bibliography. Copies are still available at \$1.25 from Mike Barrier, Box 28875, Atlanta, Georgia 30328. A four issue subscription is \$5.00.

Wonderworld is another high quality publication about comics, published by Richard Kyle, P.O. Box 16188, Long Beach, California 90806. Write to him for details regarding rates and other comics related publications that he's planning.

The **Creative Adventure** covers the field of current newstand comics and is worth your attention. The second issue features a lengthy interview with Dick Giordano which is a lot more interesting than you might expect. It's still available for \$1.00 from David Kasakove, 35 Iowa Avenue, Port Washington, N.Y. 11050.

Inside Comics has a new editor: Sam Barlow. This should mean a change from the first issue's unfortunate "expose" pose, with a trend toward solid reporting and in depth articles. The third issue features: "The Comics Code: 26 Years of Self-Strangulation?" The big names in the comic industry reveal their inner feelings about the CODE. At \$1 per issue,



you can't miss. Order from Inside Comics, 11 West 17th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011.

Our staff and associates have been busy on other projects besides *Squa Trent* which may interest our readers.

Bill Peckmann, who was instrumental in providing the Kurtzman material this issue, has published a 16"x20" print by Kurtzman, a panoramic view of a pirate's haven. The prints are individually numbered and signed, and the three color printing (in septa tones) was supervised by the artist. We highly recommend this item, sent first class in a sturdy mailing tube for \$5.00, from Bill Peckmann, Room 403, 65 East 50th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022.

Bill Pearson, editor of the now inactive *Witend*, has recently brought out *Grave Tales*, a beautifully produced 8 1/2"x11" book



of three comic stories illustrated by Don Newton, Robert Petersen, and Mike Roberts. This limited numbered edition, printed on heavy stock is available for \$1.95 from Wonderful Publishing Co., Box 15755, Arcadia Station, Phoenix, Arizona 85003. Back issues of *Witend* are still available from the same address; issues 6, 7 and 8 at \$1.50, and the ninth issue, a special all W.C. Fields photo issue (including a glossy color print of Fields rendered by Jeff Jones), at \$3.00.

And speaking of back issues, all issues of *Squa Trent* are in print at this time. For back issues, make your checks out to Jerry Weiss (important!) and mail your order to: John Benson, 307 West 50th Street, #2B, New York, N.Y. 10024. The contents and price for each issue follows.

Squa Trent #1. Flash Gordon by Williamson and Crandall; Graham Ingels history and samples of his early work; EC horror annual covers; etc. \$3.00.

Squa Trent #2. Covers by Williamson and Crandall; EC war comics article with Kurtzman sketch; Williamson perfidious "Tiga" dailies by Franetta; Wrightson art; *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy* covers; etc. \$3.00.

Squa Trent #3. Full color process covers by Feldstein and

Crandall; art by Krenkel, Metzger, Wrightson, Kenneth Smith; EC of article, with comments by Ray Bradbury, Gaines and Larry Stark; "Flash Gordon" dailies by Franetta; "Days of Wine and Fleagues" by Nick Maguire article on Crandall with sketches; Wertham article; "The Flying Swiffs" strip by George Evans, etc. \$3.00.

Squa Trent #4. Full color process covers by Ingels, Kurtzman, Kenneth Smith and Bode; art by Krenkel, Williamson, Corben, etc.; 21 pages of Kurtzman, including article by De Faccio; more "Wine and Fleagues," two unpublished EC stories by Kripstein and Crandall; Craig interview; "Amazing Merwin" strip by Evans; Franetta Collector; FanAddict Club Bulletin reprinted; etc. \$5.00.

Lastly, we should mention that Bob Stewart, whose first feature is given detailed coverage in this issue, has done an underground comic, *Tales from the Fridge* (with a nifty EC parody cover), which is available for 65¢ from Dennis Kiehn, P.O. Box 7, Princeton, Wisconsin 54908 (adults only, state apoc).

—John Benson

Just as we go to press, we have learned that what is probably the greatest comic of all time, Lynd Ward's *Vertigo*, has been reprinted. *Vertigo* is the last, the most ambitious and the most successful of the "wood-cut novels" that Ward did in the thirties. Its narrative is a deeply felt description of the effect of the Great Depression on the lives of three individuals, and the story is told with such power and purity of expression that Ward's images remain etched in one's brain years after the book is read. If ever the visual narrative achieved greatness, it is with this book.

Vertigo is now in print together with Ward's other "wood-cut novels" (*God's Man*, *Madman's Drum*, *Wild Pilgrimage*, and the shorter *Prelude to a Million Years* and *Song Without Words*) in a single large volume entitled *Storyteller Without Words*. It's published by Harry N. Abrams at \$35, and the book is worth every penny. We're sorry that there isn't enough space to cover Ward's work properly here. Perhaps we'll print a full review next issue.



